

# CHOOSING YOUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The conference is approaching...this is one of your most important decisions!

The choice of a keynote speaker is important for any conference—it's the proverbial "kick-off" for the game. And who wants a speech that goes directly out of bounds or starts the conference with a resounding thud? Whether you are a first time meeting planner or have chosen speakers for dozens of conferences, here are some questions to consider:

**Do you have a theme for the conference and will the speaker tailor their presentation?** Your conference is special to you and your audience. Your Keynote speaker should respect and want to tailor their presentation uniquely to your conference.

**Does your speaker ask questions about the conference attendees, the goals of the conference, and provide specific details about their presentation results?** This is the sign of a professional, who respects the needs of their clients and audience. The details are important and should not be left to chance.

**Does the speaker have experience in your world - or do they just talk about it?**

It is one thing to have a speaker who can share concepts and theories, but have they actually "walked the walk?" For instance, have they worked in your world, own their own business, or have real life experiences to relate to your audience? It all lends itself to their credibility. Anyone can talk, but have they actually done what they talk about?

**Are they entertaining?** Let's face it...adult audiences are sometimes difficult to keep engaged and listening to a presentation. Successful professional speakers are those who are great story tellers and can show great passion and energy.

**Be willing to work with your budget?** Professional speakers need to be paid—this is what they do for a living. And the cheapest is not always the best. If their fee is a bit high, then what other tangibles can be include in their fee—an extra breakout session, a copy of their book, etc. Be willing to negotiate, so that it will be a win for both of you!



*"Testimonials and references are important. Ask your speaker to provide specific contact information, so you can talk to others who have heard and seen their presentations."*



## Your Speaker should:

- Be knowledgeable in their area of expertise
- Add value to your conference and tailor to your theme
- Provide real information for tangible next steps
- Keep the audience engaged
  - Be entertaining!  
People want to laugh while they learn.

Whomever you choose...make sure they are the best person for your conference!